

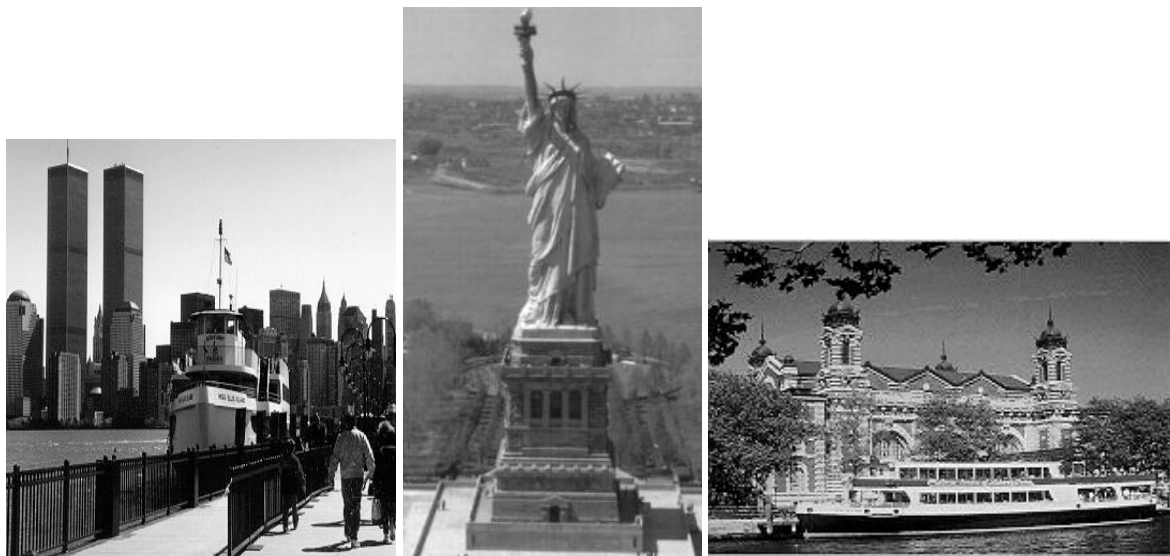
Report

Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island

■ 1.0 Site Description

The Statue of Liberty, situated in New York Harbor and one of the most universal symbols of America, was given by France and dedicated in 1886. The statue was designated a National Monument in 1924 and was transferred to the NPS in 1933. Nearby Ellis Island was incorporated as part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument in 1965 in recognition of the island's former function as an immigrant inspection station and a temporary shelter for approximately 12 million people between 1892 and 1954. Reopened to the public in 1990, the Main Building on Ellis Island is now a museum dedicated to the history of the Ellis Island Immigration Station (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. New York Harbor, the Statue of Liberty, and Ellis Island



The facilities are open every day except Christmas and attract more than five million visitors per year. Access to the facilities is by ferry service operated by a concessionaire. One round-trip ferry ticket includes visits to both islands. Ferries depart from Battery Park in New York and Liberty State Park in New Jersey. Private vessels are not permitted to dock at the islands. Admission to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island is free and all programs run by the NPS are free. Round-trip ferry tickets cost \$7.00 for adults, \$3.00 for children and \$6.00 for senior citizens.

■ 2.0 Existing ATS

In New York, ferry tickets are sold at Castle Clinton National Monument, which is located at the southern tip of Manhattan. Ferries from New York operate on a loop, stopping first at Liberty Island and then at Ellis Island before returning to Battery Park in Manhattan. Lower Manhattan has excellent transit accessibility both by rail and bus but parking is very limited. Some parking is provided for charter buses.

From the New Jersey side, ferry service is provided from Liberty State Park in Jersey City. Tickets are sold at the Railroad Terminal Building and Museum. Ferries from Liberty State Park operate on a loop, stopping first at Ellis Island and then Liberty Island. Bus access to Liberty State Park is available from the Journal Square Terminal in Jersey City. For car access, there is ample parking available in the Park and a fee is charged.

During the renovation of Ellis Island, a construction-access bridge was installed between Liberty State Park and Ellis Island. Although it is now possible to access the island via this bridge, it is not designed for public use and is closed to the public. It has been suggested by some that the bridge be opened for public use. In order for this to occur, the bridge would likely have to be replaced. The argument in favor of opening the bridge is that it would provide low-income individuals an opportunity to visit Ellis Island without having to pay for the ferry. In order for this to be feasible, however, additional transit connections would be required because the location of the bridge connection is beyond a reasonable walking distance to the Ellis Island Museum. There is considerable controversy regarding how this issue should be addressed.

■ 3.0 ATS Needs

Due to the considerable expense of operating the ferry services, including boat maintenance, fuel, docking facilities, dredging requirements, etc., it is appropriate to revisit the current system to see if improvements can be made. The concession contract for the service will be up for renewal in four years and the NPS will be reviewing their needs in 2002-2003. At present, there are service limitations during peak periods, especially at the end of day in the Summer when people want to leave the islands and return to shore. There are occasions when the boats are full and people are left behind to wait for the next boat. The ability to add boats at peak times, however, is constrained by the capacity of existing docking facilities, the expansion of which has environmental consequences.

The process of reevaluation of the ferry services has just begun and the needs will be identified in more detail. One option that is being explored is to establish a reservation system to control flow. New York University has been engaged to assess the needs and opportunities associated with meeting visitor demand. Another issue that will be discussed in the coming months is the use of alternative fuel sources for the ferry fleet.

Concurrent with the efforts to reassess the ferry services for the Park sites, water transportation in New York harbor is becoming increasingly important. In 1999, a harbor

conference was held to bring all of the providers of ferry services together with public officials and other interested parties. Other Park facilities, including Gateway NRA, are expanding or introducing new ferry services. Commuter traffic via ferry is becoming increasingly competitive as an alternative to other modes of travel during peak periods. This process is ongoing and another conference is scheduled for July 2000.

■ 4.0 Basis of ATS Needs

Given the high amount of visitation to these Park facilities, the next generation of ferry services to support the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island needs to continue to respond to the needs of these visitors. There is a risk that overuse or inadequate services will result in negative experiences at these important national treasures. It is suggested that adequate resources be made available to ensure that the ongoing planning effort and subsequent ferry services be properly advanced.

■ 5.0 Bibliography

National Park Service Web Site <http://www.nps.gov/stli.htm>.

City of Jersey City, New Jersey Web Site <http://www.ci.jersey-city.nj.us>.

■ 6.0 Persons Interviewed

Diane Dayson, Park Superintendent